Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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DRAFTED BY EA/ANZ:TJWAJDA:RLW
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SWEL, AS

SUBJECT: MEDIBANK BRIEFING

1. EMBASSY IS REQUESTED TO PASS FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM MR. HERM SCHMIDT, OFFICE OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR HEALTH, HEW, TO DR. CYRIL EVAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL, COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, P.O. BOX 40, WODEN, ACT.

2. QUOTE: CONFIRMING PREVIOUS CONVERSATION BY TELEPHONE BETWEEN DR. CYRIL EVANS, COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, AND MR. HERM SCHMIDT, US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE, USDHEW INVITES OFFICIALS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO BRIEF US GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS CONCERNING THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN, MEDIBANK, ON AUGUST 10-11 IN WASHINGTON D.C. THE US GOVERNMENT IS NOW CONSIDERING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM AND IS INTERESTED IN A BRIEFING ON THE DEVELOPMENT, OPERATION, AND IMPACT OF THE AUSTRALIAN PROGRAM.

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3. AREAS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING: HOW THE MEDIBANK LEGISLATION WAS DEVELOPED, A DESCRIPTION OF MEDIBANK'S OPERATION INCLUDING SUCH MATTERS AS ELIGIBILITY FOR COVERAGE, COST-SHARING BY PATIENTS, HEALTH BENEFITS PROVIDED, REIMBURSEMENT OF AND OTHER DEALINGS AND QUALITY ASSURANCE. IN ADDITION, WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HOW MEDIBANK IS INTEGRATED WITH RESOURCE

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DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES SUCH AS HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION AND PHYSICIAN TRAINING, THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF AND THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, THE STATES AND TERRITORIES, AND PRIVATE INSURERS IN THE OPERATION OF MEDIBANK, AND BOTH IMPLEMENTED AND PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS IN MEDIBANK SINCE ITS INCEPTION.

4. BEYOND SUCH DESCRIPTIVE MATERIALS, WE WOULD FIND IT USEFUL FOR YOUR DESIGNEES TO REVIEW MEDIBANK'S EXPERIENCE TO DATE, AS IT RELATES TO ITS EFFECT ON BOTH OVERALL EXPENDITURES AND PRICES, AS WELL AS HEALTH CARE EXPENDITURES AND PRICES. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE IMPACT THAT YOU THINK MEDIBANK HAS HAD ON BOTH DEMAND FOR HEALTH SERVICES, AND ACCESS BY ALL GROUPS IN YOUR COUNTRY TO THEM.

5. PRIOR TO AUGUST 10-11, WE PLAN TO DISTRIBUTE A VERY BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MEDIBANK TO THE ROUGHLY 30 PERSONS WHO ARE SCHEDULED TO ATTEND THE MEETING. WE PLAN TO MAKE THE MATERIAL AVAILABLE TO YOUR DESIGNEES PRIOR TO THE MEETING TO ASSIST THEM IN THEIR PRESENTATIONS. THE STRUCTURE OF THE MEETING WILL BE INFORMAL WITH AS MUCH TIME AS IS POSSIBLE OPEN FOR QUESTIONS FROM THE ATTENDEES. THE PERSONS WHO WILL BE ATTENDING WILL BE REASONABLY WELL INFORMED REGARDING THE ISSUE OF NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE. MANY MAY WANT TO DISCUSS MEDIBANK
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IN SOME DETAIL. MR. SCHMIDT WAS MOST ENCOURAGED BY THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH DR. EVANS THAT THE COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WOULD BE ABLE TO SEND PERSONS WHO HAVE MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES PERTAINING TO MEDIBANK. THIS IS GREATLY APPRECIATED AND THE BRIEFING WILL BE OF CONSIDERABLE VALUE TO US.

6. AS INDICATED IN THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH DR. EVANS, WE WILL PAY THE TRAVEL AND RELATED BUSINESS EXPENSES FOR YOUR DESIGNEES. WE WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING NOTIFICATION BY CABLE OF THE PERSONS TO BE DESIGNATED SO THAT WE CAN BEGIN TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS. AS SOON AS ADDITIONAL DETAILS BECOME AVAILABLE TO US, SUCH AS THE PLACE OF THE MEETING AND SO ON, WE WILL PASS THEM ON.

7. WE ALSO PLAN TO HAVE OFFICIALS FROM THE STATE GOVERN-MENT OF HAWAII AT THE BRIEFING TO DESCRIBE THEIR STATE HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM, WHICH MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST TO YOUR DESIGNEES. THE ENTIRE SESSION WILL LAST BETWEEN

ONE AND ONE-HALF AND TWO DAYS.

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8. THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO HELP US WITH OUR DELIBERATIONS ON NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOUR DESIGNEES NEXT MONTH. CHRISTOPHER

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